

PAUL FISCHER

1860–1934

33. *Woman in Bathing Suit, sketch*, after 1905

(*En badepige, skitse*)

Oil on canvas, 15¾ x 7 in (40 x 18 cm)

Signed bottom left: Paul Fischer

PROVENANCE: Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 682, 2000, lot 1610, ill.

As a preparatory work for larger paintings, Fischer photographed his models and then often painted a study such as the present one.

At the end of the 19th century, medical science discovered the beneficial effect on health of the sun, fresh air, and seawater, and the middle classes flocked to the countryside in the summer. Concepts such as holiday and open-air life emerged and gave rise to new motifs. Although the strict rules of the day for social behavior, dress, and etiquette could be relaxed out in the country during the summer, morals required bathing costumes that were decorous in the extreme when seen with present-day eyes, and in many places men and women swam separately. Nevertheless, it was to a great extent due to sports and outdoor life that views on morals changed fairly rapidly after 1900 and made it possible for Fischer to paint and enjoy success with pictures of girls both without and, as here, with bathing suits.

The art historian Erik Mortensen has pointed out the connection between this type of picture and the philosophical movement known as vitalism, the best known representatives of which in Denmark are the painter and sculptor J. F. Willumsen (1863–1958), the sculptor Kai Nielsen (1884–1924), and the author and Nobel laureate Johannes V. Jensen (1873–1950).

E. F.